

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 224775

LIMDIS

FOR SISCO

FOLLOWING SENT SECSTATE WASHDC FROM GENEVA 14 NOV 73:

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L GENEVA 6058

LIMDIS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, ME

SUBJECT: WORLD ROUNCIL OF CHURCHES VOICES CONCERN OVER ASSISTANT
SECRETARY SISCO'S VISIT TO VATICAN

1. DR. ELFAN M. REES OF WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES (WCC)
CALLED CHARGE LATE LAST NIGHT TO EXPRESS CONCERN OVER
ASSISTANT SECRETARY SISCO'S ALLEGED RECENT VISIT TO VATICAN
FOR DISCUSSIONS RELATING SITUATION MIDDLE EAST. HE INDICATED
BELIEF THAT SISCO MAY HAVE RAISED WITH VATICAN OFFICIALS
MATTER OF CUSTODY OF HOLY PLACES. REES STATED THAT VATICAN
REPRESENTED ONLY ABOUT 10-15 PERCENT OF HOLY PLACES IN AREA WITH
BALANCE BELONGING TO GREEK ORTHODOX OR ARMENIAN ORTHODOX
CHURCHES WHICH ARE MEMBER OF WCC AND FOR
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WHICH WCC IS AGENT. REES STATED EMPHATICALLY THAT

VATICAN COULD NOT RPT NOT REPRESENT GREEK ORTHODOX OR ARMENIAN ORTHODOX CHURCHES CONNECTION CUSTODY HOLY PLACES. REES EXPRESSED WISH TO BE ASSURED THAT NO ONE "HAD MADE DEAL CONCERNING HOLY PLACES WITH VATICAN AND WOULD NOT MAKE ONE UNLESS IT WAS FIRST CLEARED WITH WCC." THIS CONNECTION REES EXPRESSED WCC'S INTEREST IN DISCUSSING MATTER WITH SISCO AND WOULD WELCOME HIS VISIT GENEVA FOR THIS PURPOSE.

2. REFERRING TO POSSIBLE PEACE NEGOTIATION INVOLVING PARTIES TO MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT, REES STATED THAT WCC INTENDS MAKE ITS INTEREST AND POSITION KNOWN WITH RESPECT HOLY PLACES AND PALESTINIAN REFUGEES.

3. CHARGE INFORMED REES THAT MISSION UNAWARE NATURE ANY TALKS WHICH ASSISTANT SECRETARY SISCO MIGHT HAVE HAD WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF VATICAN, BUT ASSURED REES THAT HE WOULD MAKE APPROPRIATE INQUIRY AND INFORM HIM ACCORDINGLY.

4. PLEASE ADVISE. BASSIN UNQUOTE RUSH

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